GAME NOVELS

FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES
小さな村の年代記

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FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES™
ファイナルファンタジー・クリスタルクロニクル

SQUARE ENIX.

Story

Tipa is a small, remote village where the four tribes live in harmony. The Crystal Caravan is made up of the village's best people, selected to bring back droplets of myrrh to purify the village's crystal. Unexpectedly, Krim is nominated as its leader, and for the first time, he sees the true world of miasma and monsters. Amidst the confusion and fear, the story of the young Crystal Caravan begins, guided by the brilliance of their crystal.

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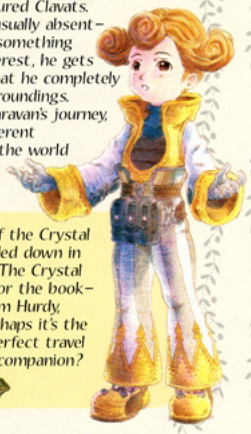
CHRONICLE OF A SMALL VILLAGE

Author: Takashi Umemura

Illustrator: Daisuke Torii

Hurdy

Hurdy is a somewhat unusual boy among the gentle-natured Clavats. Although he's usually absent-minded, when something catches his interest, he gets so absorbed that he completely ignores his surroundings. Through the caravan's journey, he offers a different perspective of the world to Krim.



A chronicle of the Crystal Caravan handed down in Tipa Village (The Crystal Chronicle). For the book-worm Hurdy, perhaps it's the perfect travel companion?

Krim

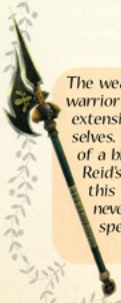
The Clavats are known for their gentle and kind personalities. Among them, Krim is a laid-back boy, and the son of a miller. While helping his father at the windmill, he also helps out in the wheat fields at his childhood friend Noah's house.

The night Krim was nominated for the caravan, his father Klaus passed down his 'lightweight sword'. He encourages and supports Krim, who isn't suited for fighting.

Reid

Long ago, the Lilty were famous warriors and ruled the continent. Hot-blooded and equipped with a fighting nature, Reid is a typical Lilty and is a central figure in the caravan, always taking the lead in battle to test his strength.

The weapons of the warrior Lilties are an extension of themselves. As the son of a blacksmith, Reid's feelings about this are strong, he never lets go of his spear.



Samrunthi

The Yukes are a race of knowledgeable people who devote their lives to the pursuit of wisdom. Their knowledge in magic is unmatched. Samrunthi has a deep interest in magic, and througout their journey, he deepens his knowledge in the subject.

For Krim and his friends, the outside world is something they'd never seen before. When it came to magic, they'd only heard stories. Samrunthi's knowledge is all they can rely on.

Hernad

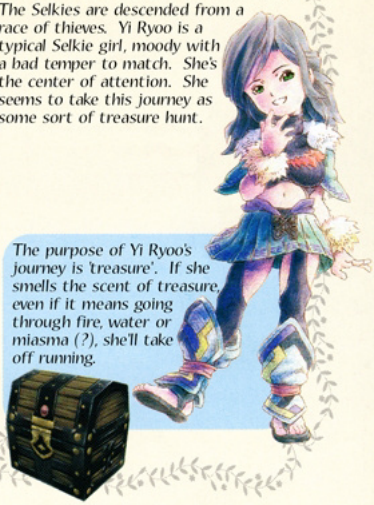
The young leader of the Clavats in Tipa Village. He was injured in a previous journey and barely made it back to the village. His companions' injuries were too severe to continue. He's taken it upon himself to pass the baton to the next generation, accompanying them and teaching them the basics.

Whenever he has free time, he plays a stringed instrument. He claims to have a big chest, but maybe it's because of the injury he sustained. He doesn't have the best reputation.

Yi Ryoo

The Selkies are descended from a race of thieves. Yi Ryoo is a typical Selkie girl, moody with a bad temper to match. She's the center of attention. She seems to take this journey as some sort of treasure hunt.

The purpose of Yi Ryoo's journey is 'treasure'. If she smells the scent of treasure, even if it means going through fire, water or miasma (?), she'll take off running.



Moogle

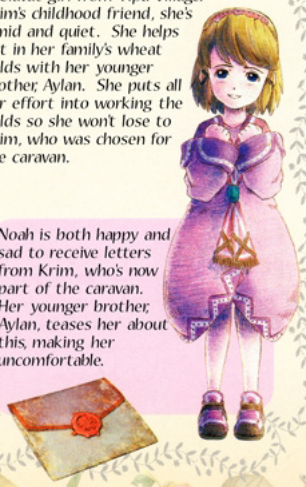
Like the carriage-pulling Papaopumus, Moogles are mysterious creatures that can move freely in the miasma. Some of them use this characteristic to work as mail carriers; but what they really want is to see the happy faces of those who receive letters, and the delicious food they get from time to time...

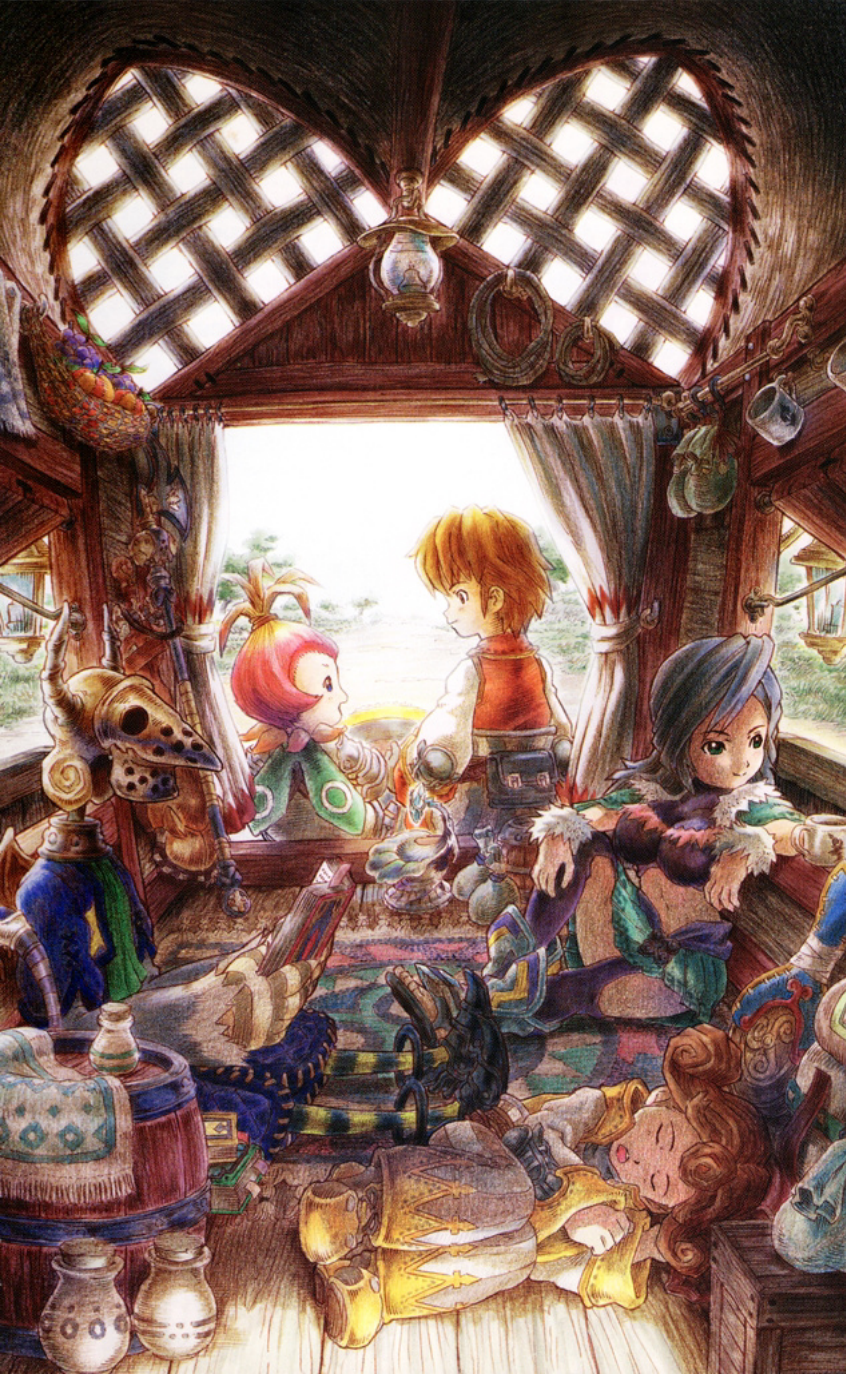
The world is full of secrets and mysteries: crystals, myrrh trees, drops of myrrh, magic, and more. But the most familiar mystery is the Moogle.

Noah

A Clavat girl from Tipa Village. Krim's childhood friend, she's timid and quiet. She helps out in her family's wheat fields with her younger brother, Aylan. She puts all her effort into working the fields so she won't lose to Krim, who was chosen for the caravan.

Noah is both happy and sad to receive letters from Krim, who's now part of the caravan. Her younger brother, Aylan, teases her about this, making her uncomfortable.





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Prologue

Long ago, this world was a paradise.

In a world enveloped by the light of the Great Crystal that shone atop the Mountain of God—Mount Vellenge—there were no disasters of any kind.

The four tribes collectively known as humans—the Clavat, Lilty, Yuke and Selkie—overcame times of war and discrimination and chose to live hand in hand with each other on the green earth.

But, that was a long, long time ago…
Now, the world is covered in miasma.

This miasma is life-threatening. Once it touches you, it eats away at your flesh, impairs your breathing, and ultimately leads to your death. The reason people can survive in a world covered in such intense poison is because of the protection of the Crystal.

With the appearance of the miasma, the heavenly crystal upon the Mountain of God was shattered and its pieces scattered across the world.

Even shattered, the crystal did not lose its power. Its glow protects a small area of land from the miasma. These small areas around the crystals became sanctuaries and people built settlements and established their histories protected by the crystal's radiance.

Although life was difficult, being confined to a limited area of land and unable to communicate with other settlements, the people still carried on strong lives.

However, the crystal's power is not eternal. Constant exposure to the miasma affects the crystal's glow, it slowly wears off and dulls.

In order to maintain this sacred power, people have to purify the crystal. Water that purifies crystals—drops of water from the sacred myrrh tree.

There are those who travel the world in search of myrrh. They are called the Crystal Caravans. The Crystal Caravan has been passed down through the generations, protecting their homeland and its inhabitants,and people continue to live long lives even today in a world shrouded in miasma.

Chapter 1: The Village of Harmony
Part 1

Creak…… Creak…… Cree-eeak…… Creak…
The windmill turned, making a familiar sound. Listening to the sound nearby, Krim lay down and looked up at the sky. Grey clouds drift across the dull, white sky. The sky from atop the windmill shed, the tallest in the village, seemed very close.

Right there is the boundary between the sanctuary protected by the crystal and the miasma. Krim thought he could see the miasma flowing away with the breeze gently caressing his face.

“Oh, I knew this was the right place.” The voice came out of nowhere, and Krim jumped to his feet and turned around.

Someone was coming up to the roof. The first thing Krim saw was curly, golden hair. Then his eyes met with a pair of gentle, reddish-brown eyes. It was the familiar face of a Clavat boy.

“Oh, Hurdy. What’s wrong?” Krim asked.

“I found something interesting.” Hurdy spoke as he climbed onto the roof. Krim saw a large book under his right arm. He probably brought it from his family’s library.

Hurdy loved to read. Perhaps because he had so many books at home, he was always reading. Among his favorites were ancient legends and fairy tales.

I remember reading the other day about the beginnings of the Crystal Caravan, Krim thought, recalling a book he and Hurdy had read together recently.

It said that when the power of the miasma dulled the crystals' shine, creatures called the Carbuncles visited the villages with a Crystal Chalice and instructed the villagers to collect droplets of myrrh from the myrrh trees to purify the crystals. The book contained a depiction of a Carbuncle visiting the village. It was a stocky creature with arms resembling wings and short legs. It looked like a bird, a beast, or a demi-human.

"I wonder what exactly it is?" Krim pondered.

"A fairy… I think. A crystal fairy." Hurdy tilted his head in response.

"Look, there's a small crystal-like thing on the top of its antenna."

Indeed, he was right: there were two antennae-like things extending from the top of the Carbuncle's head in the picture, and a small flagstone was rapped around the tip of them, emitting a dazzling light.

"Another fairy tale?" Krim said, his face lighting up at the sight of the book in Hurdy's hands.

"Things are a bit different today." Hurdy said. He crawled across the roof, toward the windmill's blades. He sat down in the shade, and beckoned with a mischievous grin.

"What *is* that? It's disgusting!" Krim exclaimed.

“Come here and take a look.” Hurdy replied as he unfolded the book, while Krim approached with a wry and quizzical smile.
Unprompted, Krim looked down at the book.

In the end shall bloom a flower.
Sacred light reveals its power.

The page Hurdy pointed to contained just that short phrase.

“What’s this?” Krim asked with a confused look on his face. Hurdy nodded in satisfaction.

“So you don’t know what it means.”

“Well, what *does* it mean?”

“It says here that it’s a poem that was left by a Carbuncle on its third visit.”

“Oh? Then it’s a fairy tale after all.” Krim said, smiling back. “But, for a fairy tale, it doesn’t make sense.”

“I think that’s why it wasn’t copied later. No other book has this in it.” Hurdy said.

Hurdy once mentioned that when a book becomes outdated, its contents are transcribed into a new book. It’s how stories are passed down. But this story was about to be forgotten.

“It’s almost a miracle that such an old book is still around.”

“So… What does the poem mean?” Krim asked.

When talking about fairy tales and other stories, Hurdy always thinks about the meanings behind them. He said that the story of the caravan’s origin was meant to teach children about the mysticism of the crystals and the importance of the caravans. So Krim thought that Hurdy probably didn’t believe that the Carbuncles existed, even though he called them ‘crystal fairies’.

“That’s the story that was passed down. That’s all that was written.”

“...So, does the poem have any meaning?”
“Well?”

“It’s funny, isn’t it?” Hurdy laughed, shaking his head.

“I don’t really follow.”

“Well, it’s a strange story and a strange poem. It’s really mysterious. It makes you think about it.”

“I wonder…” Krim said, shrugging, unable to understand what was going on this time.

“Maybe it’s something along the lines of someone in the past who tried to write a story and got bored halfway, or something like that?”

“Maybe. It’s one possibility.” Krim said. Hurdy nodded along to his words and looked at the book of poems with a smile. He looked much happier than he usually does when he talked about fairy tales.

Perhaps because Krim showed little interest, Hurdy didn't continue the conversation. He stared at the book, mumbling something and nodding his head.

Suddenly, a bird flew past in front of Krim. A small white bird with long wings and a tail. Krim followed the bird's path with his eyes as it flew around. Even the birds know they cannot survive in the miasma. So they fly low within the sanctuary. Krim's gaze continued to follow the bird around the village.

The village of Tipa, where they live, is a very small village. Everything could be seen from the windmill hut built upon the highest point at the edge of the village.

In the center of the village is the town square where a crystal sits, surrounded by dozens of wooden houses. The only other buildings are small cattle farms and fields. Beyond that, the crystal's sanctuary stretches out to the grasslands and sea surrounding the penninsula where the village is located. Further out, the world is enveloped in an atmosphere of deadly poison—an atmosphere of pain.

Come to think of it, I remember Noa telling me that they're going to start harvesting soon, Krim thought. As he gazed out at the wheat fields reflecting the sunlight in golden hues, he recalled the face of a girl he'd known since childhood.

The harvest grains are ground into flour in the windmill shed. Krim's family's job is to bag the flour to sell, or to process it into bread and other products. So the coming days will be especially busy for both Krim and Noa's households.

However, the main workers at Krim's household are the windmill and his father, Klaus. In comparison, Noa's family works the whole harvest. Despite this, there isn't enough manpower to go around. Because of these circumstances, Krim's mother ordered him to go to Noa's house around this time every year to help with the harvest.
"Okay." Krim said, rising to his feet with vigor.

"Huh? Is something the matter?" Hurdy said, startled. He'd been reading silently up until now and looked up at Krim.

"Oh, sorry."

"It's fine. It was just unexpected."

"I'm supposed to be helping Noa's family. I thought it was about time my mother called for me."

"Oh, it's that time of year already." Hurdy said nodding, turning his head towards the village.
"…But the caravan hasn't returned yet. I wonder if something happened." Hurdy's face clouded as he said this.

"Maybe they ventured further than usual. I'm sure they'll be back soon." Krim answered slowly, shifting his gaze toward the village's entrance.

There's a bridge over a small river on the edge of the village. Beyond the bridge is the only road leading out of town. The caravan would return through here in a carriage pulled bay an animal called a Papaopumus—commonly known as a Papao—a stocky, rotund creature

with a navy blue body and four short, thick legs, and a white mane hanging down its back.

“Hm?” Far off in the distance, Krim saw a small, dark blue mass moving. It was distant and vague, but it was definitely a Papao.
“Oh, speak of the devil.”

“What?”

“It’s the caravan. Look, over there.”

“Oh… yeah. Yeah, it looks like it.” Hurdy, squinting his eyes and staring at Krim’s fingertips, nodded his head in agreement.
“But, doesn’t something seem strange?”

Hearing this, Krim glared at the Papao. It was close enough that he could just jake out its rotund, thick navy blue body and the white mane that hung off of it. Its thick, short limbs were hard to see, but the Papao’s gait certainly seemed strange. It was slower than usual and was wobbling from side to side. There was nobody in the carriage’s driver’s seat. As he stared at the Papao, an indescribable sense of unease began to grow in Krim’s chest.

“I’m going.” With that brief statement, Krim ran off without even looking at Hurdy, who looked surprised.

From the roof of the conical windmill shed, one had to climb a ladder of roughly ten steps attached to the wall. At the bottom was a small platform with a door to enter. Krim ran straight across the roof and jumped down to the platform below the ladder.

“H-hey! Wait a minute!” Hurdy shouted.

Ignoring Hurdy, who was frantically chasing him, Krim jumped into the hut. He ran frantically, frustrated by the gentle spiral slope that ran along the outer wall of the windmill. As they reached the bottom of the hut, they approached Krim’s father, Klaus.

“What’s wrong? You’re in such a hurry.” Klaus said. He stopped adjusting the huge millstone that the windmill turned and looked at Krim with a puzzled expression.

“The caravan is returning.” Krim replied between heavy breaths.

“So you’re going to greet them? Just wait a moment, I’ll clean up and come with you.”

“No. I don’t know why, but something feels wrong.”

“Wrong? What?”

“I don’t know, I just have a bad feeling about it.”
Frustration and impatience ran through Krim’s body, causing him to tremble violently.
“Oh, come on. I’m not waiting. Dad, gather everyone from the village.”

“Oh, hey. You’re leaving?”

Krim did not respond to his father, nor did he call out to hurdy, who was catching his breath, and ran off again.

“Oh, Krim. You’re here to help me and Noa…”

“Later!” Krim replied briefly to his mother as he ran out of the hut, continuing to bolt off.

Krim headed down the slope from the cape towards the center of the village, crossed the central square around the crystal, and continued straight to the road leading out of the village.

He stopped on the bridge at the village’s exit. The end of the crystal’s sanctuary stood before him. Beyond it is a world swirling with miasma.

Far ahead, he could see the Papao pulling the carriage, its body wobbling side to side. The Crystal Chalice’s sanctuary swayed gently in time with the Papao’s movements.

“See? It’s strange, isn’t it?” Hurdy asked. Before Krim knew it, Hurdy had caught up to him, with his hands on his knees trying to catch his breath.

“Yeah.” Krim replied, keeping his eyes on the Papao.

“I wonder what happened to everyone?”

“I don’t know.”

“What do we do, Krim?”

“Hm…” Krim frowned and nodded, and the Papao began to veer to the left and turn off the road.
“No, you can’t do that!” Just as he saw the Papao put its foot into the grass on the side of the road, Krim took off running toward the caravan’s carriage.

“Wait, Krim!” Hurdy shouted, following suit.

The moment I took the first step, the air became thicker. The miasma that enveloped the air clung to my body, causing my skin to sting.

Krim’s lungs burned as he inhaled the miasma. The words he had heard before flashed through his mind, and Krim bit his lip and covered his lower face with his hands. Krim choked as his breath, roughened by running, raged in his chest. His legs slowed as he struggled to breathe. His throat ached from the air he unintentionally inhaled, and his knees buckled as he fell to the ground.

Hurdy, who was runing next to Krim, slapped him on the back as he was curling up.

“Let’s hurry.” Hurdy said with a small smile on his pained face.

Krim looked up to see Hurdy glaring ahead with a sharp look that was hard to imagine compared to his usual blank expression. Krim nodded vigorously and stood up. He fixed his gaze on the Papao pulling the carriage and focused all his energy on running toward it.

Pain stabbed deep into Krim’s chest, as if he had swallowed a needle. His skin screamed in agony. He ran toward the Papao with all his heart. He ran hard, feeling anxious and frustrated at the sight of the Papao, the creature showed no signs of coming closer.

They jumped toward the carraige and into the Crystal Chalice’s sanctuary. Suddenly, the weight of the air that clung to them disappeared. The sensation that had been restraining his whole body disappeared and Krim collapsed into the Papao. Perhaps startled by him, the Papao stopped in its tracks. Hurdy also tumbled and crashed into the Papao.

They took several deep breaths to catch their ragged breathing, nodded to each other, and hurried toward the carriage. They climbed from the driver’s seat into the covered bed.

When Krim and Hurdy saw what was inside, they were both stunned. Inside the dimly lit carriage lay four people, all of them had countless wounds all over their bodies and were groaning in agony.

Hernad the Clavat. Mimori Kurt the Lilty. Floritta the Yuke. Ma Ito the Selkie. Without a doubt, they were the caravanners of the village of Tipa.

“Wha…” Krim muttered, lips trembling.

Perhaps it was because he heard that short remark, one of the four people lying down looked up. It was Hernad. He looked at Krim with a pained expression on his face, his eyes widening slightly.

“Have we… arrived… at the village?” Hernad asked Krim in a hoarse voice. He and Hurdy vigorously shook their heads.

“Yeah, we’re almost there.”

“So… why are you… here…?” Hernad frowned suspiciously, coughed violently and lowered his head.

“L-let’s get back to the village. We have to hurry.” Hurdy said, staring blankly at Hernad and the others. His hands clutched Krim’s shirt sleeve tightly.

“Y-yeah. Right.” Krim replied nervously, nodding.

Sitting in the driver’s seat and holding the reins, Krim gazed at the Papao’s rounded back.

“Please, Papao. Run as fast as you can.” Krim gave the reins a firm snap, and the Papao shuddered before taking off at full speed.

Unable to contain his excitement, Krim snapped the reins repeatedly. As they approached the village entrance, Krim could see the adults gathered around. Klaus must have gathered everyone per Krim’s instruction.

As they crossed the bridge, Krim pulled hard on the reins. The Papao's body swayed from side to side a few times, then came to a stop.

"You idiot. That was a reckless thing to do!" Klaus said, with an angry look on his face, yanking Krim off the driver's seat.

"That doesn't matter right now! We need to focus on Hernad and the others!"

"What?"

"They're seriously injured. We have to hurry!" Krim uttered in a hoarse voice, causing the adults to pause for a minute.

Immediately, one of them—the blacksmith's father, the Lilty Zatt Coil—jumped into the driver's seat. The Lilty are the smallest of the four races, Zatt had to jump to reach the driver's seat. The moment he lifted the hood and peered inside, Zatt's face turned grim.

"What? This is terrible! Hey, everyone, give me a hand!" Zatt ordered.

Upon hearing his words, the adults rushed toward the carriage. The area suddenly became chaotic. The members of the caravan were being carried out of the carriage.

Hernad's mother was crying frantically.
Mimori's parents called their daughter's name repeatedly.
Floritta's father was pacing around the carriage in a panic.

“There it is! It’s alright! The myrrh was successfully collected.” Someone shouted with delight as they carried the Crystal Chalice out of the carriage.

“I’m glad…”

“As expected of Hernad and his team, they do what they have to.”

Words of relief came from all around.

Noa’s mother tapped Krim on the should as he stood there stunned.

“Come on, you need to get out of the way.” She said.

“Huh?”

“We’ve got our hands full here, so you need to take care of the fields. Noa’s the only one there right now.”

Surely, staying here would mean being a distraction. Krim nodded and headed out to the fields with Hurdy.

*

That year’s crystal purification ceremony—the Water Sprinkling Festival—was simpler than usual. Because the caravan members were still recovering an dunable to participate, the ceremony was kept to a bare minimum and there was no banquet afterwards.

Part 2

Two days had passed since the Water Festival. The commotion that day had subsided, and the village returned to its usual peace and quiet. However, the four caravan members had not yet recovered enough to be out and about, and had not been seen in public.

“I wonder if everyone’s alright?” Noa asked.

“Huh?” Krim replied. Upon hearing Noa speak, he stopped harvesting the wheat and stood up.

Standing in the middle of the wheat field, Noa looked anxiously at the village chief’s house that stood near the town square.

The village chief’s house had a large room for conducting town meetings. The four caravan members were recovering in that very room. A Yuke doctor was in charge of their recovery, and all the village’s women took turns helping.

“There’s no point in worrying about it.” Krim said.

“You’re not worried, Krim?” Noa asked, turning around in surprise at his words, her reproachful gaze turned to him.

“I am, but your mother and everyone else are doing their best to take care of them. There’s nothing to be done about it.”

“Maybe so, but…”

“We have to do what we can so she can concentrate on treating Hernad and the others, right?” Krim asked and smiled at Noa.

“Yeah, I guess so…” Noa replied, dropped her gaze slightly and looked around at the field. Her chestnut hair danced softly as the wind blew over the field of wheat.

“That’s right. There’s still plenty more wheat to harvest.”

“Yeah, let’s do our best.”

Krim nodded in response to Noa’s smile, and she bent down and disappeared into the wheat.

For a while after, the two of them continued harvesting in silence. Noa was still concerned about the caravan members, and would occasionally stop and cast a worried glance in the direction of the village chief’s house.

Krim’s back was starting to hurt from harvesting wheat stalks. He stopped, stood up, and stretched. As he stretched and twisted, he saw Hurdy walking toward the field.

“Hey, you’re in high spirits.”

“Oh, Hurdy. What’s going on with the caravan members?” Krim replied, returning a wry smile as he wiped the sweat from his face. Noa peeked out from between the ears of wheat and rushed toward the fence, out of breath.

“I believe they’re fine now. I think they got over the biggest hurdle last night.” Hurdy said, nodding with a smile.

“I see, that’s good.” Noa replied, Noa put her hand on her chest and sighed loudly in relief.

“It’s not as chaotic anymore. Now there’s an on-going meeting.”

“A meeting? Is that why your parents went to the village chief’s office?”

“Yeah, I think so. Almost all the adults in the village were there.”

“But what are they talking about to have everyone gathered there like that?” Krim said, shaking his head.

“I think it’s about the next caravan. No matter how much they say they’re okay, they’ve been severely injured so they won’t be able to travel for a while.”

“Huh, I see.”

“So I guess they’re going to form a new caravan?” Noa asked, worriedly.

“I suppose so, yeah.”

“I… don’t like that.”

“What?”

“Because… the caravan has to fight monsters…” Noa said, seemingly imagining something that sent a shiver up her spine.

Krim couldn’t help but burst out laughing at the sight of her. Hurdy stifled a laugh, too.

“Hey! Stop that!” Noa exclaimed, puffing out her cheeks and raising the scythe she was holding.

“Hey! That’s dangerous! Calm down, calm down.”

“It’s because you started laughing all of a sudden!” Noa retorted, lowering her hand with a still-disgruntled look on her face.

“You say the weirdest things. Nobody would tell you to go fight.”

“Huh? I-I guess so…” Noa responded with a bashful look on her face, visibly relaxing.

“Yeah.”

“But, looking at how you were just now, I think you could fight some monsters!”

“Hey!” Noa exclaimed, puffing her cheeks again at Krim and turned away from him.

“I see, anyway.” Hurdy said, nodding his head, suddenly serious.
“The generational shift from Hernad and the others means that the new caravan will be chosen from our age group.”

“I know that, yeah.”

“But that doesn’t mean Noa will be chosen. Reid or Samrunthi would definitely be picked, though.”

“What about a Clavat caravan member?” Noa said, looking at Krim with furrowed eyebrows. Her words made him fall silent.

Unlike the village of Shella—which is inhabited soely by the Yukes, or Alfitaria, where a Lilty king rules and key positions are held only by the Lilty—the village of Tipa, where the four races live together, has a custom of including a member of each tribe in its caravan to respect the tribal harmony.

Right now, the only Clavats in the village who are the same age as Krim are Noa and Hurdy, which means one of the three of them will definitely be selected to join the caravan.

Krim glanced at Hurdy. He was sure Hurdy would be chosen. His knowledge was on par with Samrunthi the Yuke, whose tribe was known as the People of Wisdom. His wealth of knowledge would be of great use during the caravan’s journey.

“What about you, Krim?” Hurdy asked.

“Hm? What?”

“The caravan. What do you think?”

“I… really don’t know.” Krim replied, speaking his mind, tilting his head.

“It’s an important job to protect the village, but I’ve never imagined travelling or seeing the outside world. So, I don’t really know. But I’m sure you’ve thought about these things, Hurdy, so I think it’d be best for you to be chosen.”

“I see. I think so too.”
“I wonder, though.” Hurdy said, tilting his head.

“Don’t you want to travel?” Krim said, his eyes involuntarily widened in reponse.

“No, it’s not that. I’d like to see the world outside the village. It would be very interesting. But I don’t think I’m suited to fighting monsters though.” Hurdy replied with a self-depricating chuckle.

“But..” Krim responded. Just as he was about to continue, the three of them heard the door to Noa’s house open. They all turned their heads in unison.

At the door was Aylan, Noa’s little brother.

“Sis, I’m hungry.”

“Okay, I’ll make lunch right away. Just wait a minute.” Noa replied to her younger brother, and turned to smile at Krim and Hurdy.

“We’ll have lunch together. Are you going to join us, Hurdy?”

“If it’s not a problem.” Hurdy replied with a mischevious grin.

“If you so insist, the stay out of the way.” Noa said shortly, puffing her cheeks, seemingly annoyed by something.

Hurdy shrugged and looked at Krim. Krim returned a wry smile, not understanding what was going on, and looked at Noa.

“Well, I’ll go get the wheat I harvested.”

“Oh, yeah. Thank you.”

*

The four of them were sitting at the table eating Noa’s round corn and gourd potato soup when her parents came home.

“Oh, so you three were here all along.” Noa’s father said, sitting down at the dining table. He looked very tired, probably because he was working hard taking care of the injured caravan members.

“Do you want some lunch too?” Noa asked. As she was about to get up from her seat and head into the kitchen, her father grabbed her and stopped her.

“Never mind about that, the three of you need to go to the town square immediately.”

“Huh?”

“The children are being told to gather there. Go quickly.”

“Uh, okay. I understand.” Nodding, Krim and the others stood up. Aylan jumped from his chair to follow them.

“You’re fine, Aylan.” Aylan and Noa’s mother said.

“I’m going with. I’m a kid too.” Aylan replied, pursing his lips and shaking his head vigorously at his mother’s words.

“Hey, I’m going with too.” Aylan said, grabbing the hem of Krim’s pant leg.

“Why are you telling me?”

“Because my sister would get upset.” Aylan replied with a carefree smile. Krim sighed.

“Aylan!”

“See? She’s upset.”

“Okay, fine. You can come with as long as you stay quiet by Noa’s side.”

“Hey! Krim!” Noa protested.

“Huh? Next to her? I’d rather stick by your side, Krim.”

“Then you’re not coming with.” Krim said sharply.

“...I understand. I”ll be quiet and stay by my sister.” Aylan said, slumping his shoulders.

“Good.” Krim said, nodding back at Aylan, and looked at Noa, who smiled as if she had no choice in the matter.

*

When Krim and the others arrived at the town square, about twenty children had already gathered there. Almost all of them were village children around his age.

Standing before the crystal was the village chief, Roland, a man with long white hair and a matching beard. The caravan members were sitting on the steps on the right-hand side of the crystal. All four of them looked painfully injured, bandages covered their bodies.

“It looks like everyone’s here.” Roland said, seeing Krim and the others arrive.

“Now, the reason I’ve gathered you all here is nothing short of extraordinary. As you can see, Hernad and the others are badly injured and it will be difficult for them to set out on the next caravan journey. So, we’ve decided to form a new caravan.” Roland spoke as he slowly looked around at everyeone.

“As you know, when a new caravan is formed, new members will be chosen from the next generation of people who were in the previous caravan. In other words, the new caravan members will be chosen among you. You’re all a bit too young, but there’s nothing we can do about it.

Krim heard the sound of someone nervously swallowing.

“So, for the important members… Hernad, can you help me?”

“I understand.” Hernad said, nodding and standing up. His right arm was in a large cloth sling. However, he didn’t have many other noticeable injuries, and seemed to be faring better compared to the other three.

“Now, please tell us the names of the new members.”

“First, Reid Coil.” Hernad said, lookin around at everyone with narrowed eyes. His serious demeanor was completely different from how he usually is.

“Yes!” A voice exclaimed. The moment his name was called, Reid’s sharp voice was heard.

Startled by his voice, Krim looked towards Reid. He stood with his feet together and his back straightened. Reid’s imposing posture gave Krim the illusion that he, being a Lilty, was taller than him.

“Next is Samrunthi.” Hernad said, turning to Samrunthi. He gave a small nod in silence.

The Yuke tribe has a vastly different appearance from the other three tribes. They are tall and slender, with long legs. Their long, slender arms end in large hands covered in feathers like bird wings.

But perhaps their most distinctive feature is that they all wear copper masks. Because of this, it’s impossible to read their facial expressions. In fact, it’s hard to tell if they even have faces underneath.

Even Krim, who's known Samrunthi for over ten years, had no idea what he was thinking or feeling while he stood there silently like that. It wasn't just Krim though, everyone present seemed unable to understand. Everyone stared at Samrunthi, and there was a brief moment of silence.

Samrunthi nodded once, and remained motionless.

"Can you please continue?" Roland said, clearing his throat, breaking the silence.

"Oh, excuse me." Hernad said, with a small bow of his head.
"The third new member is Yi Ryoo."

"Huh?" A voice said, dissatisfied. It was Yi Ryoo herself.

"Is there a problem?"

"Not particularly. Just why was I picked?" Yi Ryoo asked.

Many Selkies have personalites that make them unsuited for group activities. They're said to be a tribe descended from thieves, and the idea of protecting oneself is deeply rooted in them. Krim thought that even among the Selkies, Yi Ryoo in particular wasn't suited to be travelling within a group. Her doubts were understandable.

"Take a look around and you'll see why. You're the only Selkie here." Ma Ito, who was reclined on the stone steps, answered with a laugh.

“Well, it’s not like I’m the only Selkie in this village.”

“True enough, but they’re not here.”

“Is this some kind of joke? You should have summoned evereyone!”

“I did, but they didn’t show. You, however, are here.”

“That’s because… my brother is in trouble…” Yi Ryoo mumbled. As if she just remembered something, she stopped talking and bit her lip with a grim expression.

“Anyway, as a Selkie, I feel like I have no choice but to rely on you.”

“But, that doesn’t balance things at all!”

“Well, unfortunately that’s the truth of it.” Ma Ito said with a laugh.

“Oh this pisses me off. Just you watch me, you idiot of a brother. I’ll make this the greatest caravan and make you cry and apologize!”

“Oh, good luck with that.”

Yi Ryoo bared her teeth and glared at her brother, and turned away with a pout.

Amazing, Ma Ito. You easily got on her nerves. Just as siblings do. Krim thought to himself, impressed as he looked at Ma Ito, who was still laughing.

“Finally, our fourth caravan member. Hurdy.” Hernad said.

“Yes.” Hurdy answered.

It was Hurdy after all. Krim glanced at him and seemed to understand.

“And Krim.” Hernad added.

“Uh, yeah… wait, what? Me as well?” Krim asked, eyes widening in response.

“You did it!” Aylan said, nudging Krim’s leg with his elbow in delight.

“For this caravan, we’ve decided to have five people travelling together as a special group. Furthermore, I’ll be teaching the five chosen members the basics of the journey starting tomorrow, so please plan accordingly.” Hernad said.

“Hold on a minute.” A rough voice rang out. It was Gael Kurt, a Lilty.

“What is it? Are you dissatisifed with something?” Hernad asked in a cold voice.

“Yeah, of course I do! Why were Hurdy and Krim chosen instead of me?” Gael asked.

“You wish to know why? It was decided upon through a discussion.”

“If we’re talking about a custom that values harmony, then one Clavat would be enough. Why add two useless people like them to the caravan? Taking the caravan’s strength into consideration, I should have been chosen instead of either of those two.”

Although Gael's words angered him, Krim couldn't help but agree. He couldn't understand why he, of all people, was chosen.

"Well, it's because of what happened the other day." Hernad answered while scratching his head with his left hand.

"Well, I don't think it was the right choice either. But still, I think it was the correct action to brave the miasma to save the caravan and it's commendable. If Krim and the others hadn't come to our rescue, who knows what would've happened to us and the village? Gael, would you have been able to do the same?" Hernad asked in an admonishing tone.

Gael rasied his eyebrows at Hernad's words.

"I could have. Even I can do that much."

"...I see. So you were unlucky."

"That's a shame, Gael. Were you a Selkie, I'd have gladly let you take my place!" Yi Ryoo said, laughing at Gael. He glared back at her with a stern expression.

"Unless you change your attitude, you won't be joining the caravan." With a low, quiet voice, Mimori—who was sat at the top of the stone stairs—staggered to her feet, spear in hand.

"What is this? Even my own sister is against me?" Gael said in a raised voice, glaring at his sister. He looked as if he were going to burst into tears, either from anger or frustration.

"If you were to join the caravan now, you would absolutely be a hindrance. If you still insist, I'll train you hard for a year. Then, if I think you're good enough, you can join next year." Mimori said coldly.

"Why… Why? Damn it!" Gael screamed, turning away and running off at full speed.

Mimori watched him leave, and let out a massive sigh.

Part 3

"Okay. First and foremost, of course, is to protect your own life and the lives of your fellow caravan members." Hernad said to the lined-up Krim and others, but then stopped and pointed to the Crystal Chalice at their feet. "The next important thing to protect is this thing."

The Crystal Chalice had a cup-like base large enough to hold in both arms, from which something like a plant vine spiraled. At the tip of it, a small crystal fragment gave off a faint glow.

"It collects the myrrh droplets, and without the protection of this crystal shard, you can't travel through the miasma. I'm sure you understand its importance."

Krim and the others nodded in unison.

"And here's the important part: this thing is irreplaceable Legend has it that it was bestowed upon us by some strange creature, but putting that fairy tale aside, it's not something that was made by human hands. Crystals in particular are harder than any other mineral, making it impossible to scratch. It is impossible to extract a piece of it and process it like this." Hernad continued to explain, looking around at Krim and the others with glaring eyes, eventually relaxing his expression.

"But thanks to the power of the crystal, there are no monsters trying to destroy it, so there's no real need to be nervous or worried. Still, keep in mind that it is the most important thing of all. After all, the fate of the village rests on this small vessel."

Krim stared at the Crystal Chalice, swallowed heavily, and nodded.

“As for the next thing you need to be careful about…” Hernad trailed off, scratching his head with his left hand.
“Well, there’s nothing major to note. Just a lot of small details, though. I’ll explain once we’ve set out.”

“Does that mean you’ll be coming with us?” Krim asked.

“Of course. We can’t just leave it to you all of a sudde, can we?”

Krim was greatly relieved to hear this. Yi Ryoo was very obviously displeased, and Reid frowned a bit. They both expressed the same frustration, but their reasons were probably very different.

“Anyway, that’s about all the major stuff. But I’ll teach you the necessary things in due time. I want you all to have acquired the bare minimum of skills by the time we leave.”

Just as Hernad said, everyone was trained in how to make a fire, how to handle the Papao, and how to fight. Particular emphasis was placed on combat training, so they could learn how to defend themselves.

The days passed and continued like this, and before they knew it, the wheat harvest was over.

*

The night the caravan set off, as Krim was sitting in the sunroom, his father, Klaus, came into the room with a sword and shield.

“Take these.”

“These are…?” Krim asked, staring at the sword he was given, confused.

It was a plain, unadorned sword that looked well-used. The only thing that looked out of place was the cloth wrapped around the hilt, which looked to be newly wrapped; it was clean and well done. It was thick enough to fit Krim’s hand perfectly, and was surprisingly easy to hold.

“It’s the same one I used when I was in the caravan a long time ago. It’s not the most impressive thing, but I’ve re-oiled and polished it, so it should still be of use.”

“Thank you. I’ll take good care of it.”

“You idiot. A sword is a tool to protect your life, what’s the point of treasuring it? What you should value is your life. I look forward to your return with the myrrh.”

“Okay.”

“Well, you should go get some sleep. It would be embarrassing to be half asleep on the morning of your departure.” Klaus said quietly, leaving the room.

Krim placed his sword and shield next to his packed luggage and looked at them for a while.

Part 4

Early in the morning, when the morning dew was still clinging to the plants, Krim and his friends were preparing to leave by the village's entrance.

All the villagers gathered around to watch over them. Spotting Noa among them, Krim stopped loading his luggage and headed over to her.

"Is everything okay, Krim?" Noa asked, surprised as Krim ran up to her.

"Um, yeah…" Krim scratched his head and bowed slightly.

"Sorry, in the end I wasn't much help with the harvest."

"Well, it can't be helped. You were chosen for the caravan."

"Yeah, but…" Krim replied, suddenly interrupted by an irritated voice.

"Hey, Krim. Quit slacking off." Reid said. Krim glanced back at him, then turned his gaze to Noa.

"They're calling for you, you have to go."

"Yeah… I'll be on my way then."

"Have a safe trip, and good luck." Noa said, smiling and waving. Waving back at her, Krim ran back to the carriage.

Eventually, all their luggage was loaded onto the carriage and was ready to depart. Urged by Hernad, Krim and the others lined up in front of the gathered villagers.

“Well, we’ll be on our way.” Krim and the others declared in unison, the villagers responding with words of their own.

Hurdy pulled the reins and the Papao started walking, followed by Krim and the others, heading out of the village.

They crossed the bridge and walked along the straight road, with the Papao pulling the carriage in the middle of the road.

Looking back, they could see the villagers still gathered at the village’s entrance, seeing them off. Their figures were gradually getting smaller and smaller in the distance.

Chapter 2 Part 1 coming soon!

GAME NOVELS

FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES

CHRONICLE OF A SMALL VILLAGE

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FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLES

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